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Press Release

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL DARRELL V. MCGRAW, JR. FILES
SUIT TO SHUT DOWN NATIONAL CHECK CONTROL
OF SECAUCUS, NEW JERSEY, ALLEGING THAT
THE COMPANY ENGAGED IN FRAUDULENT
DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES**

Attorney General Darrell V. McGraw, Jr., announced the filing of a suit today to end the fraudulent debt collection practices of National Check Control of Secaucus, New Jersey. The suit charges that National Check Control has unlawfully threatened hundreds of West Virginia consumers with check fraud, falsely threatened that nonpayment of alleged debts could result in arrest and criminal prosecution, and added hundreds of dollars in unlawful collection fees to each check it sought to collect. McGraw said that these debt collection practices are expressly prohibited by state and federal law.

Attorney General McGraw's Consumer Protection Division began investigating National Check Control last year after numerous West Virginia consumers complained that the company's agents threatened them with arrest and criminal prosecution unless they paid debts from alleged bad checks and which, in many cases, the consumer denied writing at all.

Prior to filing today's suit the Attorney General warned National Check Control, "We would be hard-pressed to identify any collection agencies which have ever committed more egregious violations of state and federal debt collection law in West Virginia than National Check Control. We cannot and will not allow to continue these practices here."

Notwithstanding Attorney General McGraw's stern warning and demand that the practices cease, National Check Control persisted in violating the law, making it necessary to file suit today against National Check Control.

The Attorney General's suit alleges that National Check Control began harassing West Virginia consumers in January 2002 after purchasing more one million alleged bad checks from three check guarantee companies, namely, TeleCheck Services, Inc. of Houston, Texas; Check Velocity, Inc. of Nashville, Tennessee; and Certegy Check Services, Inc. of St. Petersburg, Florida. The check purchase agreements indicated that all of the checks were for very small amounts, mostly under \$25, and were written in 1998 and 1999. Attorney General McGraw's suit also explains that National Check Control would be legally barred by West Virginia's one year statute of limitations from prosecuting any of the alleged bad checks because they were all for amounts under \$500.

The suit alleges that "National Check Control" consisted of four defendants, including Check Investors, Inc., a New Jersey corporation; Barry Sussman, its President & CEO; Charles T. Hutchins, its General Counsel; and Wayne Krouse, its Vice President and broker of check purchase agreements. The suit also discloses that defendant Sussman is a law graduate who has been denied admission to the New Jersey Bar Association "because he has shown no evidence of rehabilitation since his previous convictions for bank and mail fraud."

Any persons wishing to file a complaint about a consumer matter or to alert the Attorney General about unfair or deceptive acts

or practices may do so by calling the Consumer Protection Hot Line, 1-800-368-8808.

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